

A ZINE BY
THE DOULA PROJECT

D.I.Y. DOULA SELF-CARE *for* BEFORE, DURING, + AFTER your ABORTION

What's a zine?

Zines (pronounced “zeen”) are self-published, small-circulation booklets that often look handmade or unpolished. Zines are usually reproduced on photocopiers. Zines have been a popular way to cheaply and effectively share knowledge among marginalized populations and help educate and inspire without the influence of those in power. Zines are a way to create your own media when your needs are not served by mass media, especially for issues that are too niche or controversial for mainstream media. Keeping in tradition with The Doula Project’s own radical grassroots approach, we intentionally created this guide as a zine.

This zine is like a toolbox. You might need some of the tools before your procedure, some during, or some after. You might find that only one or two of the tools are helpful. We know that we can't possibly make a guide that is helpful for every person's situation, but we hope that every single person reading this can find something inside that is helpful to them. For topics not covered in this zine, check out our resources or check with your provider, clinic, or a reputable website.

Use #DIYDoulaZine to help get the word out!

What's a doula?

We define a doula (pronounced “DOO-luh”) as a trained compassionate person who provides individuals with non-judgmental emotional, physical, and informational support to people throughout their pregnancy, allowing those individuals the ability to make healthy decisions for themselves, whether they face birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, fetal anomaly, or abortion. Check out the Bearing Witness comic for more on an abortion doula’s role.

We wish that every person who wants a doula could have one, across the whole spectrum of pregnancy. Until everyone is offered this kind of universal doula support, we encourage you to let us be your long-distance doulas. We encourage you to use these tools to be your own doula. You are awesome, and you know your body & mind best.

COPY THIS ZINE!

In order to provide free print copies of this zine to people having abortions, we’re selling copies at zine fests and other venues, and we’re taking donations on our website. We want everyone who needs this information to have it for free, no questions asked. So download it, photocopy it, leave a copy lying around the dorm, whatever!

The zine is divided into three main sections: Before, During, & After your procedure. At the end is a collection of outside resources, a glossary of terms, space to take notes, and games to play in the waiting room.

Who is this zine for?

This zine is for anyone and everyone who is getting an abortion, whether the experience is easy or hard. We use the word "abortion," but your experience might be closer to a miscarriage or loss, or a wanted pregnancy where the timing wasn't right, or an unwanted pregnancy from an unwanted sexual act. Whatever words you use, we hope these tools can help. Throughout this zine, we have tried to keep in our hearts the many people who are not typically well-served by the medical system.

Who wrote this zine?

We want to recognize that the people writing this zine don't represent the diversity of experiences of people who have abortions. This zine is written by a collective of NYC-based full spectrum doulas who are primarily white, able-bodied, cisgender, college educated, USA citizens, who speak English as a first language and who have access to an extensive public transportation system. We have the privilege to volunteer, the privilege to work in a state with less restrictive abortion laws, and the privilege to have clearance to directly support patients in procedure rooms.

Our experiences are primarily in clinics and hospitals across New York City. We have been supporting people who have abortions individually and as a collective in various capacities since before abortion was legal in the USA.

A Note on Language:

Not everyone who can get pregnant or has an abortion identifies as or calls themselves a woman or uses "she/her." We use "person who is pregnant" and "they/them" in this zine to include everyone and be respectful of the language they prefer. In cases where we are citing a statistic where the source used "women," we have tried to balance our desire to be inclusive with our need to cite our sources properly by saying, for example, "3 in 10 people who the Guttmacher Institute identified as women." We have cited our sources this way to reflect the diversity of gender expression and to acknowledge that institutions, especially medical institutions, often coercively designate or make assumptions about our bodies.

Beyond words, we value people creating their own identities and challenging the traditional definitions of male and female that exist in our society.

In most of the work in this zine, we used words most often heard in clinical/medical settings. If there are words that don't work for you, we encourage you to write in whatever words you prefer. If you want, cross out "vagina" and substitute "vajayjay." It's your zine now. Write whatever you like in it!

A Note on Access:

All bodies & minds are different. All bodies & minds have value. Feel free to modify any of the exercises and activities in this zine to suit your needs. If any of the words or images are visually inaccessible to you, please check our webpage for a text-only version. We hope to offer language translations soon.

A Note on Trigger Warnings:

There are many topics in this zine that some people may find triggering. Even the focus of our zine, the subject of abortion itself, can be triggering. As such, we want to broadly note that the zine deals with the following topics: **abortion, anatomy (including illustrated nudity), faith, gender, getting support, a range of feelings & emotions, god, grief & loss, medical terms, nausea & vomiting, oppression (including unfair treatment by medical providers), pain & discomfort, pregnancy, sex, sexual assault, stigma, strong language.** We have tried to use neutral words and images throughout this zine. When referring to abortions, we also often use the words “procedure” or “ending a pregnancy.” Each section also has a list of the titles of the pieces to help you navigate which pieces you may want to skip over. We encourage you to explore these topics in ways that feel safe to you.

Self-Care & Survival

We want to take a moment to acknowledge that some lives are not so easy as merely deciding to end a pregnancy and heading to the clinic. Sometimes no amount of deep breathing or drinking tea or listening to music can do a damn thing for us. It may seem like a waste of time when you’re trying to survive. Many of us face pressure from society, our social group, our family, or our partner to terminate a pregnancy. Some of us might return home to violence. Sometimes to stay alive and keep our health, we have to say goodbye to a wanted pregnancy. Sometimes we feel like our lives are not our own and face control from someone else. Sometimes we are too young to stand alone. Sometimes we are too broken to say no. Sometimes our “no” was/is not respected. In these times when the world seems to want our emotional, if not physical, destruction, we plead with you to remember that staying alive and surviving keeps you here with us one more day. One more day to move forward and love yourself even if it seems like no one else does or if it seems like their “love” is what is killing you. Making a decision to survive and not let others destroy us — even if we can do nothing else — is an act of self-love that no one else can do for us. You are not alone in your struggle and we stand with you. We survive with you.

The official stuff: This zine is a work only of The Doula Project and is not affiliated with or representative of any other organization, including our clinic and hospital partners. We do wish to extend Special Thanks to the Abortion Conversation Project for their Seed Grant that helped make publication of the zine possible.

This zine is an informational resource only and is not intended to cure, treat, or diagnose anything. The contents of this zine, including text, graphics, images, and other materials, are for informational purposes only and do not constitute medical advice; the content is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. This zine is also not intended to be patient education and does not create a patient-provider relationship. Always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition, including mental health, before making health care decisions. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this zine. If you believe you have a medical emergency, call a doctor or 911 immediately. This zine is provided "as is", and reliance on any information provided by this zine is solely at your own risk. The Doula Project expressly disclaims responsibility, and shall have no liability, for any damages, loss, injury, or liability whatsoever suffered as a result of your reliance on the information contained in this zine.

What is Self-Care?

Self-care looks different to everyone. It's a way of prioritizing your own needs, even if it's hard. There are a lot of messages in the world that don't encourage us to take care of ourselves first, but with self-care, you take care of yourself the way that you would treat someone else you love very much. It's a practice that isn't always easy.

Self-care is not always taught to us, but it's something you can get better at as you do it more often. It can be built into your everyday life. It's not just something that is associated with one difficult event. Self-care is a way of having your own back. Sometimes self-care means asking other people for help, but sometimes self care is finding what you need in yourself.

Self-care can be especially hard for people who are busy with the caring of others: as parents, in their personal lives, or in their jobs. When you're on an airplane, they tell you to put on your own oxygen mask before you help someone else. You can't take care of another person if you can't catch your breath. That's self-care, and it can be a radical idea!

Some ideas for self-care include...

prioritizing comfort **laughing** listening to music
acknowledging the small acts that you do for yourself crying
unplugging from technology
healing listening to your body **journalling**
accepting that you need self care taking medications you need
saying "no" **rest** not judging yourself rejuvenating
taking a hot bath having sex (with yourself or others!) asking for help when you need it
being outside dancing/movement/other exercise
cuddling animals charging your battery catching up on chores
loving yourself as much as you love others
creating a safety plan **drinking enough water**
doing nothing getting enough sleep
giving yourself permission to be selfish
shower and brush teeth space & time
replying to emails
spending time with people you love **meditation** taking a walk
harm reduction not being too strict with yourself
eating what your body needs **delegating**
staying in bed all day **drawing**

6 MYTHS ABOUT ABORTION

There are many myths about abortion that add to the stigma that surrounds abortion. We're here to set the story straight so that you can take the best care of yourself!

1. Abortion is dangerous.

Actually, having an abortion is far less dangerous than carrying a pregnancy to full term. It's one of the safest medical procedures out there. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), not even one quarter of 1% of people have major complications post-abortion, which (according to the Guttmacher Institute) makes having a legal abortion safer than an injection of antibiotics.

2. Abortion is uncommon.

Nope. Approximately 3 in 10 people [who the Guttmacher Institute identified as women] in the United States will have an abortion by age 45. People have abortions for many reasons, including concerns about not being able to care for another individual, as well as financial, health, and relationship issues.

3. Abortion causes infertility, breast cancer, depression, etc.

According to the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, there is very low risk of suffering long-term health problems as a result of having an abortion. Most healthcare providers agree that having an abortion does not affect your ability to get pregnant. In fact, you can get pregnant very soon after having an abortion! If you're concerned about this possibility, talk to your doctor about contraceptive options. And while each person responds differently to having an abortion, according to the American Cancer Society, there is no link between breast cancer and abortion. A study published in the PLOS One academic journal found that the overwhelming majority (95%) of people who have an abortion feel that they made the right decision. They also found that there is no difference in the rate of mental health concerns between people who choose to have an abortion and people who, facing similar circumstances, do not. We encourage you to love and trust yourself.

4. Insurance plans never cover abortion.

Actually, it's a good idea to check with your insurance company. It's not always easy to find out, so ask the clinic staff to assist you with this. Many insurance plans do cover abortion, but if yours doesn't, there may be other options available to you, like a sliding scale clinic or an abortion fund. (Be aware that sliding scale clinics and abortion funds may have limited resources, so they may only be able to help folks who are having trouble making ends meet.)

5. Some types of abortion are better than others.

Really, the best type of abortion is the type that's right for you. Your options will be determined by what's medically appropriate, what you have access to, and your personal priorities. For example, some people may choose medical abortion because it allows them to remain at home during the abortion, while others may choose surgical abortion because there is typically less blood/clotting that must be dealt with personally.

6. If you have an abortion, you're going to Hell.

Okay, we don't have a direct line to God or anything. But we do hope that whatever your belief system is, it includes understanding & love – because you deserve that. [More in our "After" section.]

1. CDC. Abortion Surveillance — United States, 2011 63(SS1)., & W Cates, D. Grimes & K Schulz. The Public Health Impact of Legal Abortion: 30 Years Later Guttmacher Institute; 2004. 2. Induced Abortion in the United States. New York: Guttmacher Institute; 2016. 3. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. 2015 Frequently Asked Questions Special Report. 3. American Cancer Society (2014) Is Abortion Linked to Breast Cancer? & Rocca CH, Kimport K, Roberts SCM, Gould H, Neuhaus J, et al. (2015) & Decision Rightness and Emotional Responses to Abortion in the United States: A Longitudinal Study. PLoS ONE 10(7).

Bearing Witness INSIDE CLINICS AS ABORTION DOULA

AN ABORTION DOULA IS SOMEONE WHO PROVIDES physical, emotional, & informational support BEFORE, DURING, AND/OR AFTER AN ABORTION PROCEDURE. THAT CAN MEAN HOLDING THEIR HAND, TALKING TO THEM ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL, DOING BREATHING EXERCISES, AND MORE. SOMETIMES THIS ROLE IS FILLED BY A NURSE, SOCIAL WORKER, OR FRIEND, BUT SOME CLINICS HAVE A SPECIFIC ABORTION DOULA ROLE. I'm an abortion doula.

BY MICK MORAN

SOMETIMES, WE TALK ABOUT THINGS YOU MIGHT EXPECT IN A CLINIC...



BUT SOMETIMES, IT'S NOT WHAT YOU MIGHT EXPECT...



CONVERSATIONS ARE OFTEN "NORMAL" DAY-TO-DAY TOPICS LIKE TV OR FOOD.



THEY CAN COMMUNICATE WITHOUT WORDS & I CAN HELP TO "HOLD SPACE" FOR THEM.

*Comic originally created by Mick Moran for the 1 in 3 Campaign's Our Stories Will Not Be Erased. Updated for this zine.

we trust you. you have known yourself longest of anyone you've ever known. you have spent all of your life exploring your heart, your mind, your limits, your loved ones, your future, your family, your past, your strengths and your fears--all of the complex, invisible strings stuffed inside of you. you explore them each day, with every action and you know them. you know them better than us, better than anyone who may claim to know. you know all of the invisible strings pulling you from the outside, too. all of those complexities of life, the directions they pull in. the strength with which you meet them and how they each interact with all of the strings inside of you. every single one of our choices, including today's, might be different, if those strings were different.

TWO PEOPLE HAVING THE EXACT SAME PROCEDURE MAY REACT TOTALLY DIFFERENTLY.



SOMETIMES PEOPLE SAY THINGS THAT ARE SHOCKING OR HARD TO HEAR.



BUT WE TRY TO GIVE PEOPLE SUPPORT EVEN THROUGH REALLY DIFFICULT SCENARIOS.
in the RECOVERY ROOM



AT THE END OF THE DAY, ALMOST EVERYONE IS GRATEFUL TO HAVE HAD SOMEONE OFFER THEM SUPPORT, WHETHER THEIR PROCEDURE WAS EASY OR HARD THEIR FIRST OR NOT, WHETHER IT'S VERY SAD, A HUGE RELIEF, OR SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THING I'VE LEARNED IS THAT EVERY PERSON & EVERY PROCEDURE IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT. THERE'S AN ENORMOUS RANGE OF NORMAL PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCES. AND AT THE END OF THE DAY I'M ALWAYS HUMBLED & GRATEFUL TO BEAR WITNESS TO THESE MOMENTS OF PEOPLE'S LIVES.

ONE DOLLA I KNOW DESCRIBES OUR WORK AS:

"we basically provide unconditional love
5 minutes at a time..."
AND I THINK THAT'S PRETTY ACCURATE

even if with heart, experience, or good intention, the people who know you second-best are guided by the tugs of their own internal and external strings. they are not you and they do not know you like you do.

you know where you are. you know where you're going.
you know where you've come from.

we trust you. we love you, want to celebrate you, hold you, and trust you.
we trust you completely.

"we trust you" by cynthia friedman

BEFORE

In this section...

- Things to Do to Prepare
- Identifying Support
- Talking to Family (or Not)
- Logistics: Childcare & Transportation
- DIY Heat Pack
- All the Feels: A Worksheet
- Questions to Ask Your Provider

THINGS TO DO TO PREPARE

ART BY MICK MORAN

HAVE FOOD READY! GROCERY SHOP AHEAD + PREPARE SOME MEALS THAT WILL BE EASY TO HEAT UP LATER. COMFORT FOODS, SOUPS, + CASSEROLES ARE GREAT.



Have clean clothes ready, like your FAVORITE comfy PJs.



TRY TO DO TASKS BEFORE, IN CASE YOU NEED A REST AFTER AND ASK FOR HELP IF POSSIBLE. HOMEWORK, CHORES, AND LAUNDRY CAN BE GOOD TO GET OUT OF THE WAY.

BUY PADS! / *Gather Books, MAGAZINES, CRAYONS, COLORING BOOKS, MUSIC, + WHATEVER ELSE YOU'LL WANT WHILE YOU WAIT. (FLIP TO THE BACK FOR OUR WAITING ROOM GAMES)*

GIVE YOURSELF Permission TO TAKE A BREAK, IF YOU CAN.



* a note on GROOMING

YOUR PROVIDER HAS SEEN IT ALL, SO UNLESS YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO A THING TO YOUR PUBIC HAIR TO BE "READY" FOR THE PROCEDURE. YOU ALSO DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE IF YOU DIDN'T GET A BIKINI WAX OR SHAVE YOUR LEGS. THAT BEING SAID, IF SHAVING A LIGHTNING BOLT INTO YOUR PUBES MAKES YOU FEEL RAD + EMPOWERED, GO FOR IT!!!

IDENTIFYING SUPPORT

BY CHRISTINE FEMIA

Take a minute to think of the people that you know: family members, partners, bffs, neighbors, coworkers. Run their faces through your mind. Who do you feel most like yourself around? Start there. Who will be able to be there for you? Whether you see them daily, weekly, once in a while, whatever, consider how you can let them give you any support you might need right now.

Testing the Waters: Before you share your own story, you can ask some general questions to gauge how this person might respond. For example, you might say, "My friend is getting an abortion and needs a ride," or "Wow, there's so much in the news about abortion lately." Watch their faces. Hear their tone. This will help you decide what of your story feels safe enough to share with them.

Logistics: Who is going to drive you? Who will be where you go next? Maybe they can cook for you, hold your hand or hair back, make sure your favorite song is queued up in the car or movie is ready to watch when you get home.

Remember: You don't have to explain why you need help to ask for it.

You can say you don't feel well — can your neighbor get your mail? — without telling that neighbor the nature of how you're feeling or why.

Feeling Your Feelings: Who can you ask to be there for you? What will you tell them? You might find you want to be specific, or you might not. Your loved ones might surprise you by what they have to say by the stories they have, too.

(Remember that 30% of people that the Guttmacher Institute identified as women have an abortion experience before the age of 45, but because of stigma, you might not have heard about abortions your friends have had.)

*If the people that surround you right now aren't able to give you what you need, remember: you can and you already have taken really good care of yourself.

TALKING TO FAMILY (OR NOT)



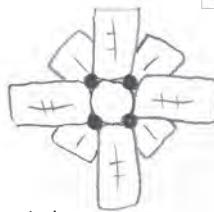
Bobby

Parents led the charge
at thirteen,
when Bobby had been misled
down a path of deals and exchanges
which created a pregnancy,
unwanted.
This first abortion was
anxiety-ridden,
traumatic,
judged as "premature".
So this time,
Bobby takes control.
Bobby casually mentions to the Parents
that abortion restrictions in Texas
are hitting close to home.
The Parents
can read between the lines.
Explicit details unnecessary,
topic changes to the weather.



Alex

Pregnant
with an ex's child,
a thoughtful decision to
terminate.
The decision, wracked
with visions of the future
and guilt for the misinterpreted
irresponsibility
is Alex's prerogative.
Alex lives with Mom & Dad,
but chooses to
"mum's the word";
personal choices, you see.
And that's quite all right.



Shea

The possibility of
pregnancy
led to a finalé;
no children, not now.
Shea has a clear mind,
schedules an abortion.
A child of a single mother,
Shea is tight with Mom
and openly divulges the
appointment.
Mom respects Shea's
decision
and accompanies Shea
to the clinic.



Dee

Raised with Christian values—
"abortion is a sin"—
Dee struggles
to realize that maybe their
Parents' values
don't align with their own.
The reality of raising a child
as a PhD student
doesn't appeal to Dee.
Dee wants to wait.
Dee schedules an abortion
and excludes the family from knowledge
of this
personal medical decision,
avoids their
judgement.

LOGISTICS

CHILDCARE

Navigating any unexpected health care situation, including terminating a pregnancy, can be an extra challenge with young children in your life.

Let's start with a reminder that this situation isn't uncommon. The Guttmacher Institute has reported over 60% of people they identified as women having abortions in the U.S. already have at least one child. Even more are the primary caregivers for children that may not be their own. Friends with children the same age as yours have likely gone through this as well.

TRANSPORTATION

Here are some points to consider:



- ✓ Figure out your route and plan in advance.
- ? Is there a clinic near your home accessible by public transportation?
- ? Can someone drive you, or can you prearrange a taxi for both ways?
- ? If traveling to a location that is far away or in a state with a waiting period, can you arrange somewhere to stay?
- ? Can you afford the transportation and lodging you need? If not, organizations like the National Network of Abortion Funds (<https://fundabortionnow.org/>) may be able to help.
- ✓ Get a travel buddy.
- ✓ After your procedure, you may feel disoriented, crampy, or nauseated and should not drive for a few hours. The clinic may require you to have an departure escort if you choose sedation for your procedure. Your companion can also support you through any nervousness and distract you while you wait. They can also give you moral support if you need to walk past protesters to get to your appointment.
- * *If you have a partner, family member or friend who supports your decision, don't feel shy about asking them to come with you. It's not weak to have someone with you. It's smart. You deserve it.*
- * *If you have someone local who cares about you, but doesn't support your decision, ask them anyway, maybe something like this: "I know you do not love this decision but since you love me, I need your help with a ride."*
- * *If you don't have local support, feel you must be private about your abortion, or are traveling far from home for your procedure, reach out to an organization like NYC's Haven Coalition that helps patients with transportation, lodging, and support.*

- Arrange childcare for all of the time you need, including travel time and time to rest immediately following your procedure. Clinics can feel like slow places and watching the clock while you wait could add stress.
- If you must bring your children, also bring someone who will be comfortable alone with them for several hours during your procedure and recovery. Children are generally not allowed in office areas and even older kids should not be in the waiting room without an adult.
- If possible, arrange different support people for yourself than for your kids, so you can focus on your own needs before, during, and after the procedure.
- You do not need to disclose the details of your personal situation with your childcare giver. You can ask for the support you need in a general way. People generally won't ask for medical details if you don't bring them up first.
- If your children are in school or preschool, you may be able to find a clinic that is open when your children are being cared for already. Some daycares and schools have extended hours available for parent appointments.
- You don't have to put your kids out of mind during your procedure. Making sure you can be the best parent to your kids may be part of the reason you are choosing an abortion, and that's okay. Many patients successfully calm themselves or distract themselves from the discomfort of the procedure by talking about their families with their provider, nurse, or doula.
- After your procedure, you may feel crampy, nauseated, or under the weather for a few days, or more emotional than usual. Your kids may pick up on this and may come to you with extra love, extra worry – or extra acting out. Let them support you in age-appropriate ways and reassure them that you're okay if they ask.
- Lifting toddlers or bigger kids or having them jump on you may be an issue for a few days. So share this kind of care with others or ask your kids to be gentle with you.
- Find some privacy away from your kids to think or talk to a friend on the phone if you need that.
- Some of the medications used for anaesthesia can be incompatible with nursing for a short time after use. If you can, store a day or two of pumped milk before your procedure. Ask your provider whether to "pump and dump" after your procedure. Most insurance now covers lactation pumps for lactating parents.

diy heat pack

A large question mark with the words "HOW DOES IT WORK?" written along its curve.

BONUS TIP!
Like to sew?
you can also use
fabrics scraps instead
of socks! 

Heat increases blood flow to sore areas & helps muscles relax

1

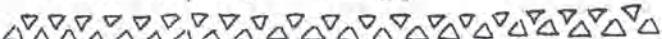
2

MICROWAVE ON HIGH, 2 MINUTES

CAREFUL!! SOCK WILL BE HOT

3

Remove from microwave and place wherever you're feeling sore ~ ~ you can always reheat the pack if it cools!



*you can also add lavender or other good-smelling stuff!

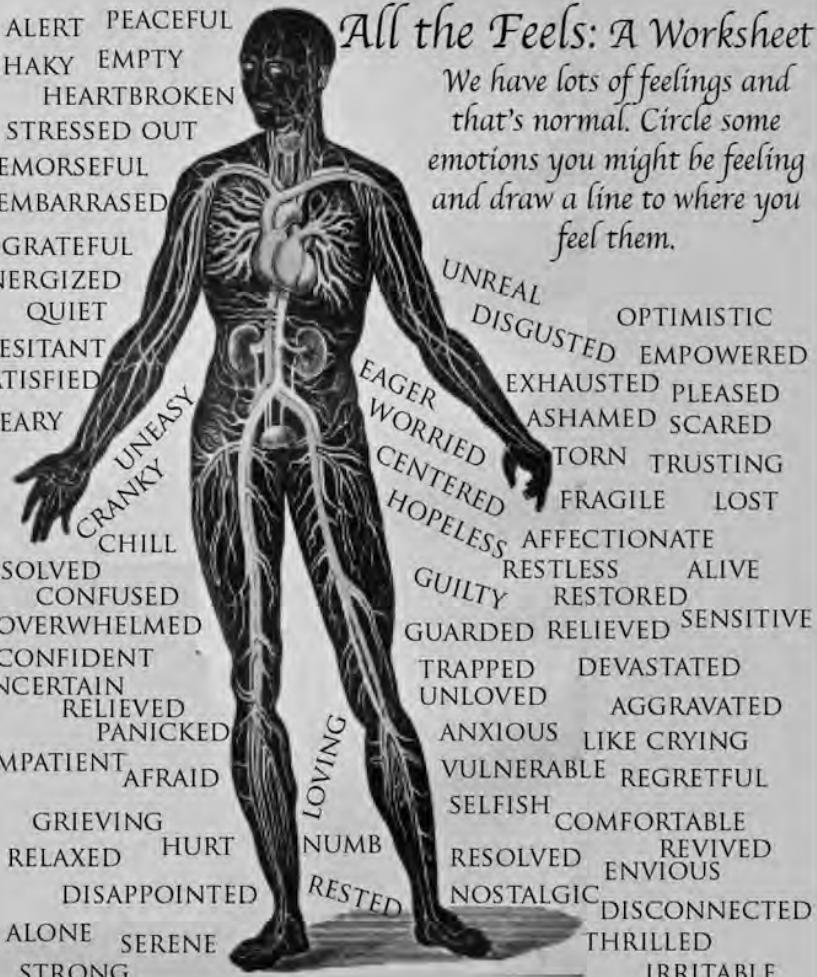
** Please use regular rice, as "quick cooking" rice may burn or catch fire!!

DIY Heat Pack by Angie Frankel

REMEMBER: You are strong.
You are brave.
You know the best decision for YOU.

If you find it helpful, you can repeat these phrases to yourself or ask a support person or provider to say them to you. You can use them before, during, or after.

ALERT PEACEFUL
SHAKY EMPTY
HEARTBROKEN
STRESSED OUT
REMORSEFUL
EMBARRASSED
GRATEFUL
ENERGIZED
QUIET
HESITANT
SATISFIED
WEARY
UNEASY
CRANKY
CHILL
RESOLVED
CONFUSED
OVERWHELMED
CONFIDENT
UNCERTAIN
RELIEVED
PANICKED
IMPATIENT
AFRAID
GRIEVING
RELAXED HURT
DISAPPOINTED
ALONE SERENE
STRONG



All the Feels: A Worksheet

We have lots of feelings and that's normal. Circle some emotions you might be feeling and draw a line to where you feel them.

- Where are these feelings coming from? (From you? From people in your life? From beliefs around you?)
- Are there any feelings that you expected to feel? Any that surprise you?
- Do any of your feelings conflict with others that you have?
- Which feelings do you want to let-go of? Which do you want to hold on to?



Art by Mweya Waetjen

DURING

- In this section...
- What do I need?
 - Letting Everything In
 - Breathing Comic
 - Healing Light Visualization
 - Being Your Own Advocate
 - r u dealing with a shitty provider?
 - See No Evil, Hear No Evil
 - The Anti-Affirmation Asshole
 - Abortion Anthems
 - Permission Slip to Not Give a F*ck

check in with yourself: in this moment,

what do I need?

by Cynthia Friedman



I thought I would never have an abortion. Although I have always been pro-choice, I believed that abortion was ending life and that I wouldn't choose to do that. More than that, I NEVER thought I would find myself having to make that choice. So when I found myself faced with an unplanned pregnancy, I really wrestled with my decision and afterwards I was left with an abundance of very strong emotions.

People experience a very wide range of feelings after an abortion from deep loss to relief. Most experience a mix of many emotions, some that may even seem conflicting. What I found most helpful was having a place where it was safe to express them without being judged. I didn't need to be judged by others; I was already my own worst critic. I had already internalized many of the negative messages that exist out there in the world about abortion and the people who have them. Identifying as a woman, it's not easy in our society to decide NOT to have children. Despite my political position and knowing I had made the best decision for everyone involved, I felt that I had done something very wrong.

I was lucky to have a place to go and allowed myself to give voice to whatever my thoughts and feelings were. I just let it all be there. And then I was able to move on with my life. So find a someone you trust, one person or a few together, who can just listen, really listen to everything going on inside you without judging or giving advice or having to tell you about THEIR feelings and just let themselves be with you. They might want to hold your hand or make some kind of contact, you decide. Your job is just to allow whatever is there to be released so that you don't have to carry those feelings bottled up inside you. No feelings are out of bounds: angry ones, sad ones, shameful ones, happy ones. Some people may even feel ashamed of feeling good. They all get to have their place.

Remember that deciding to have an abortion is a CARING decision.
Have your listener read you this meditation or you can read it to yourself.

Letting Everything In

by Jini Tanenhaus

Silently be with your breathing for a few minutes.

Your intention in this meditation is to invite everything in. All parts of yourself: the small frightened parts, the courageous parts, the selfish parts, the kind parts.

Say to yourself, "You, the selfish one, come in. Be here.

You, the one who forgets to be kind to yourself, come in. Be here.

You, the one who remembers from time to time that your life matters, please, come in."

Whatever comes into your mind or heart, whether it is some form of suffering or some insight, it does not matter.

Simply recognize it and invite it in.

Just sit quietly and breathe a few minutes.

Notice what appears...

IT'S OK

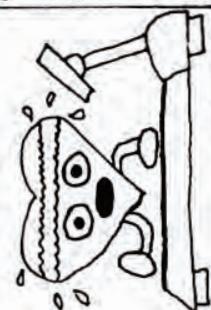
DURING YOUR ABORTION, YOU MIGHT FIND YOURSELF FEELING TENSE OR ANXIOUS. SLOW, DEEP BELLY BREATHING CAN HELP YOU RELAX.

WHEN YOUR BODY FEELS STRESSED, FORTUNATELY, WHEN YOU OR ANXIOUS, HORMONES ARE RELEASED THAT INCREASE YOUR HEART RATE, WHICH CAN MAKE YOU FEEL EVEN MORE ANXIOUS.

WHICH CAN HELP YOU FEEL MORE WHICH CAN HELP YOU CAN TRY!

Breathe deeply

AHHHHHH



YOUR BODY RELEASES A DIFFERENT HORMONE TO YOUR HEART RATE

THEN

HOLD

PULL THE AIR INTO YOUR STOMACH, SO IT EXPANDS LIKE A BELLON.

IF YOU NEED HELP SLOWING DOWN, YOU CAN COUNT SLOWLY TO YOURSELF.

1 2 3
4 5

YOUR BREATH IN WITH YOUR STOMACH EXPANDED FOR A FEW SECONDS.

BY: HELEN BOLTON

to be nervous or scared. You can be nervous or scared and still be able to handle things like a champ!

If you're overwhelmed, can't remember tools you wanted to use, or end up without the support you'd hoped for, all is not lost.

One of the best tools you have is taking **slow, deep breaths** like shown here in the comic.

REPEAT AS NEEDED

SLOWLY AND DEEPLY THROUGH YOUR NOSE.

AS YOU EXHALE, TRY TO LET ALL OF YOUR MUSCLES.

LET YOUR KNEES FALL TO THE SIDE. LET GO OF ANY TENSION.

THROUGH YOUR MOUTH, SLOWLY PUSHING ALL OF THE AIR OUT OF YOUR STOMACH.

Healing Light Visualization

by Annie Robinson

Meditation and visualization—practices used to connect and calm the mind and body—are effective even when done for just several minutes a day. They can improve immunity; relieve depression, insomnia, and stress; and ease aches and pains. If you are new to these practices, try to approach them with curiosity, not judgment. Notice what you resonate with, and what you resist. Be an observer, not a critic.

Light is a powerful element to use to dissolve and clear tension, be it physical, emotional, or mental. The below healing light visualization can be used before, during, or after having an abortion.

Try using this script to practice. You can record yourself reading the script and listen to it, take turns reading it aloud with a friend, and then as you become familiar with the meditation adapt it to be used anytime you sense you need some healing energy. It can be particularly nice to do in the morning, before getting out of bed while still lying down.

Settle into a comfortable position, either sitting up or lying down on your back.

Gently close your eyes. Place your hands face up or down, or place one palm over your heart and the other over your lower abdomen. Feel yourself drawn down towards the earth by gravity. Allow your shoulders to drape down your back.

Place your attention on your natural breath. Follow the rise of your inhale, and the fall of your exhale. When you breathe in, say silently to yourself: "Breathing in." When you breathe out, say silently to yourself: "Breathing out." Repeat for 5-10 breaths.

Imagine a beam of warm golden light pouring into the crown of your head.

Allow it to pour down through every part of your body, all the way down to your toes. Notice how this golden light travels: Does it swirl like smoke? Stream like water? Radiate like sunlight? Continue drawing this light throughout your body for 5-10 breaths.

Now scan your physical, emotional, and mental bodies and identify a part of you that needs healing: perhaps your lower back, your abdomen, or your heart space. On each inhale, direct the golden light streaming in from your crown to that part of you. On each exhale, allow the light to dissolve any pain or tension.

Repeat for 5-10 breaths. Notice the temperature and texture of the light.

After 5-10 breaths, slowly release the visualization.

Notice how you feel, physically, emotionally, mentally.

When you feel complete, gently open your eyes.

being your own best advocate

When we are worried, stressed, excited, scared, etc. it can be very difficult to clearly state what we want. As your long-distance doula as we invite you to fill out this tear-out before your appointment and bring it along with you. There are many people who are treated unfairly because of their physical abilities, skin color, gender expression, language differences, and other differences. We encourage you to be your own advocate, while also acknowledging that receiving respect can be a real struggle. Please, love yourself and do what feels right for you.

Examples: "I feel safe when someone holds my hand." "I feel most comfortable when my provider says things like: 'are you ready to start?' and not: 'I'm starting now!'" "I like to hear encouraging words, how much time is left, slang/not technical terms..." "I will need an interpreter." "I will need help getting onto the chair/table." "I do not want to hear the words vagina, cervix, speculum..."

"Please use the name _____ when speaking to me or about me."

"I use the pronouns _____."

"I will need _____

_____."

"I feel most comfortable when _____

_____."

"I feel safe when _____

_____."

"I like to hear _____

_____."

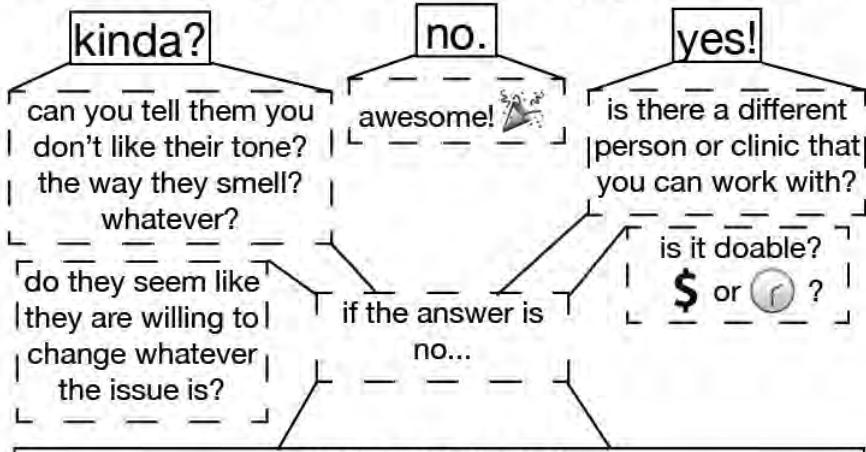
"

_____."



Most providers are offering termination care because they CARE. Unfortunately some don't, some are having a sh*tty day, or they are just abrasive. Their sh*t isn't your concern right now. Your #1 priority right now is you.

r u dealing with a sh*tty provider?



tune out! put your headphones in with some jams, radio show, podcast... at least you don't have to listen to their sh*t.

talk to someone! tell a friend, family member, counselor, therapist, spiritual advisor... about your experience.

get it off! take a hot shower, get a massage from someone you trust, rub yourself down with oil, sage yoself!

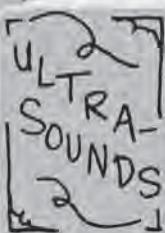
write it out! a letter, journal, note on your phone... whether or not you use the information later or not. this will help you get it out and process whatever emotions you might be feeling. if you are interested in filing a complaint, you could speak to the clinic or the state medical board. (more info in resource section)

START

PROTESTERS



Experiences of Other Patients



Vacuum noises & beeping machines

DOES THE CLINIC HAVE ESCORTS?

YES
NO

YOU'LL HAVE SUPPORT AT THE CLINIC. ASK FOR INFO BY PHONE

CALL A FRIEND WHILE WALKING INSIDE

EYES ON THE DOOR TO AVOID SIGNS

TRY TO KEEP MOVING. THEIR GOAL IS TO STOP YOU.

Physical

Emotional

Chatter

Don't assume! NOT EVERYONE IS HERE FOR THE SAME REASON.

EVEN IF SOMEONE IS GETTING THE SAME PROCEDURE AS YOU, EVERYONE HAS A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE. SOMEONE MAY BE SAD, ANOTHER MAY PUKE, ANOTHER MAY LAUGH WITH A FRIEND.

SEEING THE PICTURE

HEARING THE HEARTBEAT

PROVIDER NARRATION

Be direct. MANY PROVIDERS WILL DO THEIR BEST TO ACCOMMODATE IF YOU SAY "I'D RATHER NOT SEE OR HEAR." EVEN IF THEY HAVE TO CRANK UP THE RADIO WHILE THEY DO THINGS REQUIRED BY LAW.

PROVIDER TALK

UNHELPFUL SUPPORT PEOPLE

INTIMIDATING MISINFORMATION

TRAINING NEW PROVIDERS

CHATTER ABOUT UNRELATED STUFF LIKE WORK DRAMA

CHANGE THE SUBJECT

ARE YOU STUCK WITH THEM? LIKE FOR A RIDE HOME OR YOU LIVE WITH YOUR MOM?

YES

NO

CERTAIN LAWS MAKE PROVIDERS GIVE SCARY MISINFORMATION. IT'S OK TO TUNE OUT IN THE MOMENT + GET INFO LATER FROM A TRUSTED SOURCE.

TRAINING NEW PROVIDERS IS CRUCIAL FOR ABORTION TO CONTINUE. YOU CAN SOMETIMES OPT OUT, OR TUNE OUT IF YOU'RE HEARING MORE THAN YOU WANT TO

"IT WOULD HELP TO JUST FOCUS ON MY BREATHING" OR "SOME QUIET WOULD HELP RIGHT NOW."

IT'S OK TO ASK FOR SPACE! THEY CAN HANG IN THE WAITING ROOM OR GIVE YOU TIME ALONE AT HOME. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO ASK DIRECTLY, SEND THEM ON AN ERRAND.



SEE no EVIL

- LOOK AWAY
- CLOSE YOUR EYES
- PICK A SPOT TO FOCUS ON



HEAR no EVIL

EARPLUGS: OR PUT YOUR FINGERS IN YOUR EARS
MUSIC: HEADPHONES, SING, OR HUM
TALK: TO SOMEONE ELSE OR EVEN YOURSELF



THINK no EVIL

- DEEP BREATHING
- THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE
- GUIDED MEDITATION/ VISUALIZATION

NO matter WHAT

EVEN IF YOU CAN STILL SEE OR HEAR SOMETHING YOU WISH YOU DIDN'T...

KNOW THAT THIS IS temporary.

TRY USING THINGS FROM "DURING" LIKE DEEP BREATHING TO GET THROUGH THESE TOUGH MOMENTS. ❤

By Helen + Mick Bolton + Moran

The Anti-Affirmation Asshole

by Alex Pitre

The funniest joke I think I have ever made is “I’m an asshole. It’s not that I think assholes are fundamentally evil, but sometimes they do shitty things.” This is probably pretty revealing about my sense of humor. It is also pretty revealing about how I view myself.

There are some days when I am a ray of sun sent directly down from the heavens. There are other days when I am the slimy scum that someone washes off their hands. When I find myself in a provider’s office, I’m generally the latter. And when I am having the second kind of day, if someone tries to tell me I am a ray of sunshine, I might burn down their house. But, hey, I’m an asshole.

Sometimes assholes do shitty things. Sometimes I make poor decisions, and then I have to face them. I’m not interested in facing those decisions as a cupcake of positivity. I’ll probably only face those decisions as the scummy asshole who messed it all up to begin with.

My rejection of affirmations isn’t because I have a completely negative view of myself. It potentially comes from my completely contrary nature — some might even call it ornery. So even if the affirmation is “I know my body best,” which I completely agree with on a sunshiney day, in my head I’m thinking, “No shit. I’ve been living in it all these years. And, Body, haven’t we been through some storms?” I’ve wasted what some would consider a perfectly good affirmation with my lack of positivity or self-love or whatever I’m supposed to have to ferry me from the Kingdom of Asshole.

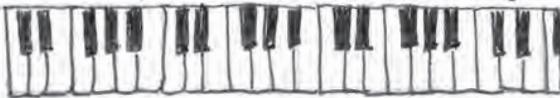
I will mope and hate on myself. I will bathe in a cold tub of guilt. I’ll probably cry some good, hot tears. When all is said and done, I’ll walk out of the clinic saying, “I took care of myself and can I get a ‘HELL YEAH?’” And the waiting room will erupt into cheers, and someone will hand me a delicious cookie.



Abortion * Anthe^ms

From celebratory to sad, boisterous to wistful, there are songs for every occasion. There are studies that show music has a therapeutic benefit, so it is no surprise that vocalization helps people cope with pain. So, why not pick your own abortion anthem? I promise you won't be the first person to sing through an abortion. Sing at the top of your lungs, or hum quietly - your providers might even join in!

Here are a few suggestions to help you find your anthem:



- Adele - "Rolling in the Deep" - great for sing-a-longs
- Jeff Buckley - "Hallelujah" - beautiful to hum softly
- Beyoncé - "Me, Myself, & I" - for strength
- Nicki Minaj - "Feeling Myself" - perfect mantra
- Anything by Ani DiFranco or Dar Williams
- La Roux - "Bulletproof" - power dance time
- OR pick your own song - remember how music soothes the soul. think Bob Marley "When the music hits you, you feel no pain."

Permission Slip

TO NOT GIVE A **F*CK**

by mick moran

Most of this zine is going to try to help you do everything you can do to advocate for yourself, empower yourself, and get your needs met. You might feel like you're being asked a lot of questions that are very invasive or are not the most sensitive to your body or your experiences.

I hope that you have a glorious experience with magical unicorn providers who say all the right things and make you feel so comfortable you wish you could take them out for ice cream afterwards. But I want to acknowledge that **just asking for support can be hard**. Asking a provider (even a unicorn you'd share a chocolate cone with) to do things a little differently for you can be a challenge. And sometimes, it's an exhausting process. Sometimes, it is harder to ask for what we really want than to just go with the flow. **Sometimes, choosing to go with the flow can be self-care.**

For me, as a genderqueer person who uses gender neutral pronouns, this might mean I don't out myself, or I don't correct someone who mislabels me: "she," "her," and "this lady."

For me, as a fat person, it might mean I simply let someone deliver a lecture about my weight, even if I might usually refuse to let them shame me. I might zone out, instead of my usual way of engaging the provider in a discussion about Health At Every Size.

For one person, it could mean not stopping to explain to a protester why reproductive healthcare is none of the protester's business. For other people, it might mean letting a microaggression slide, or not disclosing a poly or kinky relationship, or not wanting to share the real reason or tell the whole story for wanting an abortion to a provider or a friend.

Don't get me wrong: this kind of erasure can feel counterproductive or too personally damaging to be universally helpful. But for some folks, it is another tool for survival on a difficult day. Choose your battles. Ditch guilt. If you need permission from someone to take the path of least resistance today, rather than the path you would usually take or the path that you think makes you a good person at the end of the day...

I am giving you permission now.

Write yourself a permission slip to not give a f*ck. I signed it for you.



Permission Slip	on _____	for _____
to not give a f*ck about	WHATEVER THE F*CK YOU WANT	
Granted by:	YOU	& ME

AFTER

- In this section...
- When to Seek Medical Attention
 - Saying Goodbye
 - So What About SEX?
 - "Will God Forgive Me?"
 - Herbal Teas & Tinctures
 - Telling Your Story
 - Herbal Foot Soak
 - Yoga After Abortion
 - + Resources & Glossary
 - + Thanks
 - + Space for Taking Notes
 - + Waiting Room Games

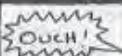
When to Seek Medical Attention

from www.plannedparenthood.org:

*ALWAYS FOLLOW YOUR PROVIDER'S INSTRUCTIONS!



"very heavy bleeding – if you pass clots larger than a lemon or soak through more than two maxi pads an hour, for two hours or more in a row"



"severe pain or discomfort that is not helped by medication, rest, a hot water bottle, or a heating pad"



"chills and a fever of 100.4° F or higher after the day of the procedure"



"nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea that lasts more than 24 hours"



"an unpleasant, smelly discharge from your vagina"



"signs that you are still pregnant"



note: these warning signs apply to both medical abortion (the abortion pill) and aspiration abortion (dilation and)

"In-Clinic Abortion Procedures." *Planned Parenthood.*
Planned Parenthood, n.d. Web. 7 March 2016.



SAYING GOODBYE

by Jini Tanenhaus & Kyle Vereyken

Having an abortion can create a lot of change in your life. You might want to take time to think about your experience, and find acceptance with your decision. It may be helpful to say “goodbye” as a way to find closure or comfort, and to acknowledge your experience. Or you might not feel the need to. Trust yourself - you know what is best for you.

One way to say “goodbye” is to write a letter. This letter can be addressed to anyone: to the pregnancy, to a relationship, to being a parent, to “what could have been,” or even a letter to yourself.

Say whatever you want in the letter. Be honest. What do you need to let go of? Get it all out! When you feel like you’ve written everything that you need to, decide what you want to do with your letter. You can burn it, bury it, tear it into tiny pieces and throw it to the wind, or even keep it somewhere safe, so you can read it again in the future if you want.

There are lots of other ways to say “goodbye,” depending on what might have meaning for you:

**HAVE A GOOD CRY
GET TOGETHER WITH FRIENDS
SPEND TIME IN NATURE • WRITE A POEM
DANCE IT OUT • LIGHT A CANDLE**



IT CAN TAKE TIME TO LET GO.

REMEMBER TO BE KIND TO YOURSELF.

SO...what about **SEX?**

contributed by
Jini Tanenhaus

JUST AS EVERYONE'S EXPERIENCE WITH ABORTION IS DIFFERENT, EVERYONE'S EXPERIENCES BEFORE + AFTER ARE, TOO. ATTITUDES ABOUT **SEX** AFTER AN ABORTION CAN VARY FROM GOOD TO BAD TO INDIFFERENT. YOU MAY FEEL AS THOUGH YOU NEVER WANT TO HAVE **SEX** AGAIN. YOU MAY ASK, "WHEN IS THE SOONEST I CAN HAVE **SEX** AGAIN?" OR YOU MAY NOT EVEN WANT TO THINK ABOUT IT. ALL THESE REACTIONS ARE PERFECTLY NORMAL.

SEX IS A PART OF LIFE THAT VARIES GREATLY FOR EACH PERSON AND OFTEN CHANGES OVER TIME. WHEN IT COMES TO PENETRATIVE **SEX** AFTER AN ABORTION, FOLLOW YOUR PROVIDER'S INSTRUCTIONS. TO PREVENT INFECTION, MOST PROVIDERS RECOMMEND THAT FOR A WEEK AFTER YOUR PROCEDURE, NOTHING GOES IN, SUCH AS A PENIS, TAMPONS, DILDOS, **SEX** TOYS, ETC. (FINGERS INCLUDED, TOO, UNLESS YOU'RE INSERTING A CONTRACEPTIVE RING.) ORAL, ANAL, AND OTHER **SEXUAL** ACTIVITY IS AT YOUR PLEASURE. IF YOU NEED IT, YOU SHOULD START USING CONTRACEPTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SINCE A NEW PREGNANCY CAN OCCUR EVEN BEFORE YOUR NEXT PERIOD. YOU DON'T NEED TO WAIT FOR BLEEDING TO STOP COMPLETELY UNLESS YOU DON'T LIKE TO HAVE **SEX** WHILE YOU ARE BLEEDING. ORGASM MAY BRING ON CRAMPS, OR IT MIGHT HELP YOU FEEL A LOT BETTER. YOU MIGHT FEEL A LITTLE SORE, BUT **SEX** SHOULDN'T BE PAINFUL. WHEN, WHERE, AND HOW OFTEN TO HAVE **SEX** IS YOUR CHOICE, JUST LIKE YOUR ABORTION. YOU ARE THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS HAD YOUR EXPERIENCES, AND SOMETIMES WE FORGET PEOPLE CAN'T READ OUR MINDS. SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE MAY WANT TO REACH OUT FOR HELP WITH WHAT THEY ARE COPING WITH. (SEE OUR RESOURCES PAGE.) IF YOU ARE ABLE, WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO BE OPEN WITH YOUR CURRENT OR FUTURE PARTNERS ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS + NEEDS, WHETHER THEY WERE WITH YOU FOR THE ABORTION OR NOT. BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF. WHEN IT COMES TO **SEX**, THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO LISTEN TO AND TRUST YOUR BODY.

"will God forgive me?"

many people come in with this question heavy on their hearts, whether asking God, Allah, Hashem, Jah, Ahura Mazda, Karta Purakh, the ancestors, or the universe.

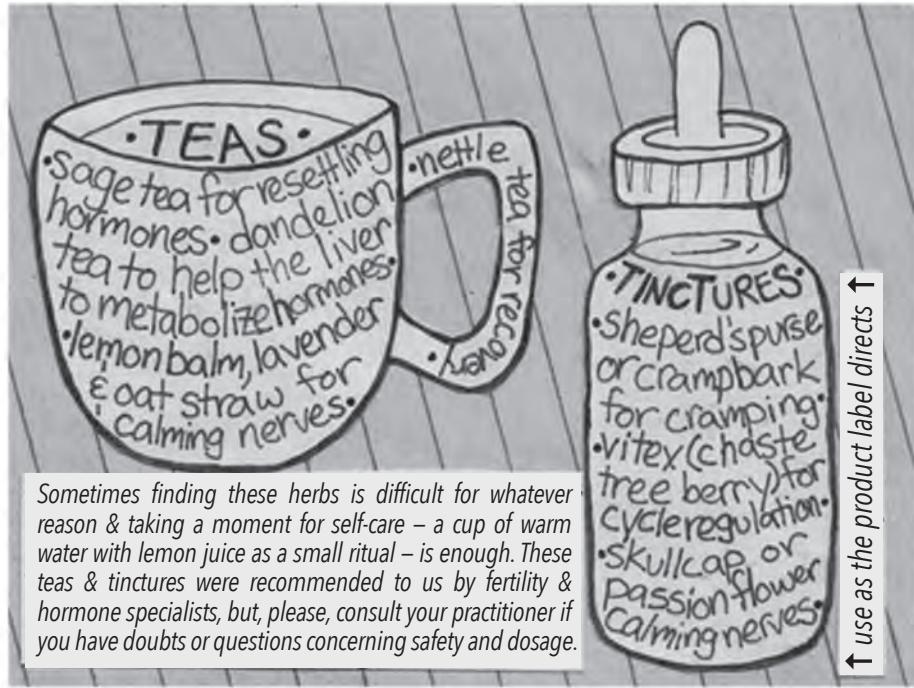
Remember that:

God is forgiving & unconditionally loving — that means no matter what.

God knows your heart and mind as much as your choices — if we believe in an all-knowing, ever-present divinity, God knows the time, care, struggle, and thoughtfulness that you have approached this choice with.

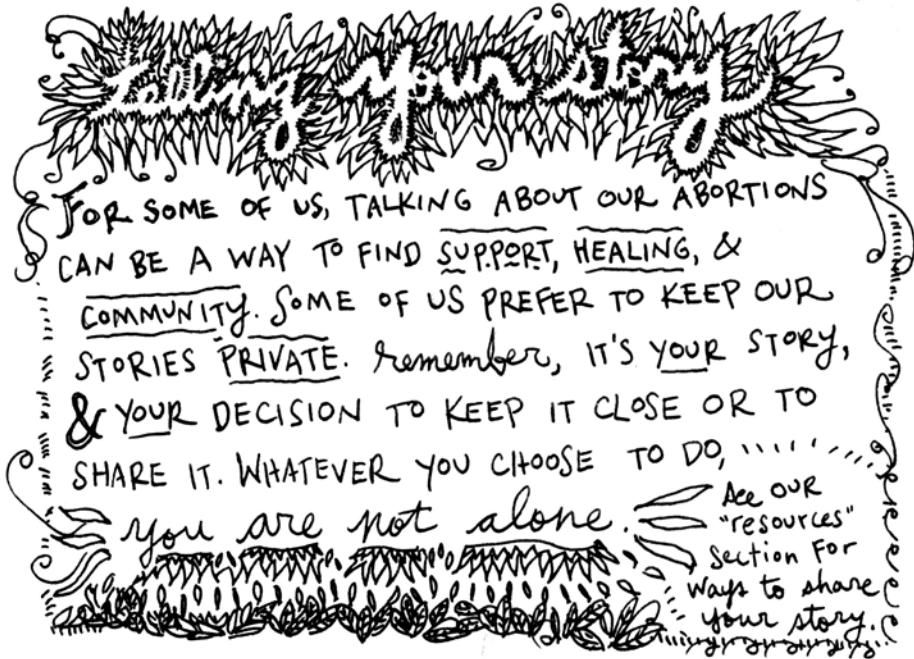
God knows that the world is imperfect & complex — people may need reminders of perspective and compassion. God does not.

You are not alone — so many people in religious and spiritual communities, who have made a similar choice or who have supported loved ones choosing to end a pregnancy, brought God's love into the room with them and now stand by your side.



Teas & Tinctures by Alex Pitre

Telling Your Story by Sarah McCarry



HEALING from the Root

Herbal Foot Soak

BY DANIELLE MOESER

our feet carry the weight of our lives.

when they're cold or sore, it can make us feel colder or more tense all over. Allowing our feet to soak in warm water can bring relief not only to that area, but to our whole body, & may even help a tense mind to relax. The simple act of sitting & soaking in hot water is enough. Taking a few minutes is enough. If you also have access to some oats &/or herbs, you can incorporate these healers into your foot bath.

(P.S. You can also try this recipe as a hand soak! However, do not take a full body bath/immerse your pelvic area in water for the medically recommended amount of time after an abortion.

SUPPLIES:

- BASIN/BOWL WITH ENOUGH SPACE FOR BOTH FEET (USUALLY AVAILABLE AT A DOLLAR STORE)
- TOWEL

OPTIONAL SUPPLIES:

- OATMEAL (A HANDFUL)
- LAVENDER FLOWERS
- COFFEE GRINDER, BLENDER, OR FOOD PROCESSOR
- OLD NYLON STOCKING OR MUSLIN TEA BAG

DIRECTIONS:

- BOIL A POT OF WATER OR RUN THE TAP VERY HOT & FILL YOUR BASIN HALFWAY. DON'T PUT YOUR FEET IN YET!

- IF YOU'RE USING LAVENDER, SCOOP IT INTO A TEA BAG OR TIE IT IN A STOCKING & DROP THIS INTO THE WATER SO IT CAN STEEP LIKE A TEA.

- GRIND OATMEAL INTO A FINE POWDER (SO IT WILL DISSOLVE IN THE BATH), OR LEAVE IT WHOLE (& USE THE TEXTURE AS A GENTLE SCRUB), THEN ADD IT TO THE WATER. LET IT MIX.

- ADD COOLER WATER TO BRING THE BATH TO YOUR DESIRED TEMPERATURE.
- SIT IN YOUR MOST COMFORTABLE SPOT, PLACE YOUR FEET IN THE BATH, & SOAK FEET (FOR AT LEAST 5-10 MINUTES IF YOU CAN & IF IT FEELS GOOD), ADDING MORE HOT WATER WHEN NECESSARY.
- I INVITE YOU TO BE THERE FOR WHATEVER, IF ANYTHING, COMES UP & WHATEVER RELEASES AS YOU SIT & SOAK YOUR FEET. IT CAN BE NICE TO DRINK SOME WATER OR TEA AS YOU DO THIS.
- ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED, DRY OFF YOUR FEET WITH A TOWEL. POUR THE LIQUID DOWN THE SINK OR BATH DRAIN & THROW OUT ANY LEFTOVER OATS OR HERBS.

OATS ARE MOISTURIZING
AND MAY HELP SOOTHE
THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

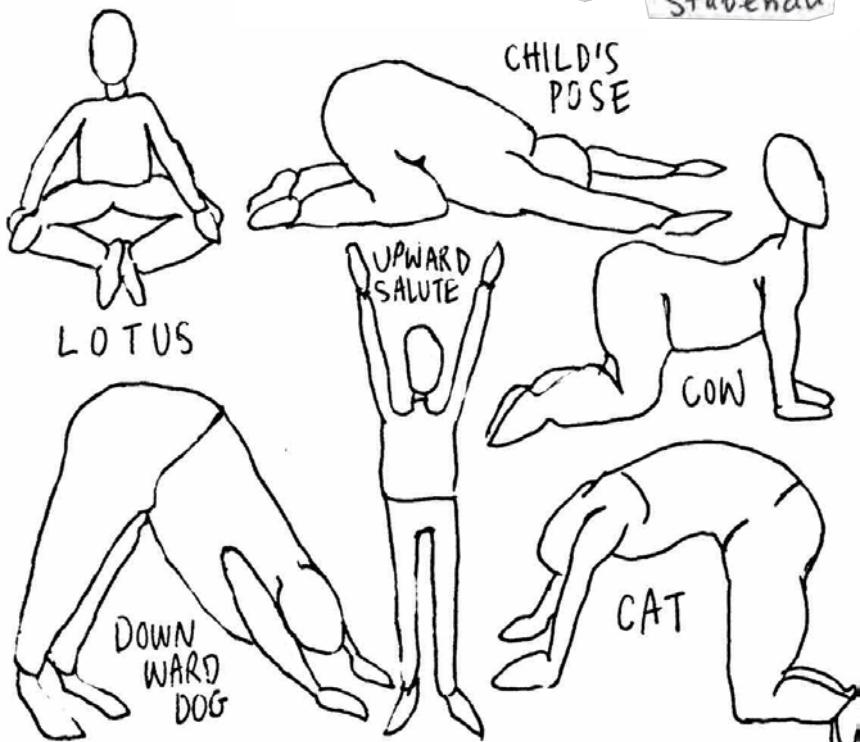
LAVENDER IS THOUGHT
TO HAVE ANTI-BACTERIAL,
CALMING, & MOOD LIFTING PROPERTIES

HERBAL WISDOM USED TO WRITE THIS FROM: ROSEMARY GLADSTAR'S MEDICINAL HERBS: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE (2012), AND HERBAL RECIPES FOR VIBRANT HEALTH (2001); ANDREW CHEVALLIER'S HERBAL REMEDIES (2007); & FROM THE LONG TRADITION OF HEALERS THROUGH THE AGES & THE INFINITE WISDOM OF THE EARTH.

YOGA after ABORTION



Anyone can practice yoga! It is the practice of breathing, mindfulness and gentle movement. These things can be very healing and centering after an abortion. Try to set up a peaceful space - blankets, candles, favorite music, and practice breathing in these poses or other gentle yoga poses you find online or in your community. XO ☺ Annelise Stabenau



CONSULT YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER BEFORE STARTING A NEW EXERCISE REGIMENT AND ALWAYS LISTEN TO YOUR BODY!

RESOURCES



We hope these resources are useful for you before, during, and after your abortion. This list of websites and books have been curated in hopes that they can provide you with comfort, empowerment or assistance. This list is by no means complete and we welcome additional resources to add to future publications. As a disclaimer, we would like to recognize that many of the resources compiled use cis-centric and heteronormative language and speak to those experiences. We also acknowledge that so much published material comes from a hegemonic classist and racist system that does not represent or respect everyone's experiences. We have done our best to minimize triggers and be sensitive to language included in the resources to ensure they provide a safer space for as many people seeking information as possible. We embrace the varied experiences of everyone who reads this zine and all the aspects of their identity.

Thank you for understanding!

Books

Taking Charge of Your Fertility by Toni Weschler

A book to help you better understand your reproductive health & menstrual cycle

Our Bodies, Ourselves by The Boston Women's Health Book Collective

Trusted information on sexuality and reproductive health

The Radical Doula Guide: A Political Primer by Miriam Zoila Perez

A primer addressing the political context of supporting people during pregnancy & childbirth

Coloring Book for Grown Ups: Creative Patterns for Adults by Blue Star Coloring

To keep you busy in the waiting room or keep your mind from wandering before/after your abortion

Pro-Voice: How to Keep Listening When the World Wants to Fight by Aspen Baker

Written by the cofounder of Exhale about how they developed the "Pro-Voice" philosophy

Sacred Choices: The Right to Contraception and Abortion in Ten World Religions

by Daniel C. Maguire — A book on access to contraception and abortion from the viewpoints of various religious ideologies

Healing Sex: A Mind-Body Approach to Healing Sexual Trauma by Staci Haines

The first encouraging, sex-positive guide for women survivors of sexual assault — heterosexual, bisexual, lesbian, coupled, and single — who want to reclaim their sex lives.

Pro: Reclaiming Abortion Rights by Katha Pollitt

A powerful argument for abortion as a moral right and social good by a noted feminist

Support & Hotlines

Exhale—1-866-4-EXHALE—www.exhaleprovoice.org

Exhale creates a social climate where each person's unique experience with abortion is supported, respected, and free from stigma.

RAINN—1-800-656-HOPE—www.rainn.org

National Sexual Assault Hotline. Free. Confidential. 24/7.

National Domestic Violence Hotline—1-800-799-SAFE—www.ndvh.org

National Domestic Violence Hotline provides lifesaving tools and immediate support to enable victims to find safety and live lives free of abuse.

Center for Reproductive Rights—www.reproductiverights.org/form/report-violations

[Report a Rights Violation] For the past 20 years, the Center for Reproductive Rights has used the law to advance reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right.

NAF Hotlines—<http://prochoice.org/think-youre-pregnant/naf-hotline/>

For referrals to quality abortion providers call 1-877-257-0012 (no funding assistance provided on this line). For unbiased information about abortion and about other resources, including financial assistance, call toll-free 1-800-772-9100.

Zines & Articles

RAIX Zine: Reproductive Justice en la Frontera PLUS Five More RJ Zines By POC + Other Resources! by La Frontera Fund & Texas Freedom Network Education Fund

Explores the intersection of art and activism to uplift and challenge narratives about gender & queer identities, reproductive justice, and border communities.

pennyroyal by Zoë Boyle

A zine about being an abortion doula and all of the emotional turbulence that can accompany it. Examining the space where political discourse meets reality, the zine is a personal reflection on the ways that abortion work is both emotionally trying and endlessly rewarding. It can be found at Bluestockings bookstore in NYC or bought from the author at zoe.caits@gmail.com. Free to abortion workers and people who have had abortions.

You Are Not Alone by Catholics for Choices

Spiritual guidance about your decision to have an abortion from Catholics for Choice.

Cosmopolitan's Guide to Getting a Safe Abortion by Caitlin Moscatello & Robin Marty

The steps to take no matter how far along you are, or how much money you have.

Podcasts

CHOICE/LESS—Rewire—<https://rewire.news/multimedia/podcasts/>

In each episode of CHOICE/LESS, you can find personal stories about reproductive injustice, and the laws that put people in choice-less situations.

The Abortion Diary Podcast—<http://theabortiondiary.com/>

The Abortion Diary is the intersection of self-expression, healing, and the art of story-sharing and story-listening.

MORE RESOURCES: Websites

Backline—yourbackline.org

The only national talkline that welcomes calls at any point during or after pregnancy, whether callers are looking for options counseling, support before or after abortion, or a chance to talk about parenting, pregnancy loss, adoption, or infertility.

Draw The Line: Stories from Center for Reproductive Rights—drawtheline.org/stories

Draw the Line is a campaign in which people from all walks of life step off the sidelines & speak out.

Futures Without Violence—futureswithoutviolence.org

FUTURES has been providing groundbreaking programs, policies, and campaigns that empower individuals & organizations working to end violence against women & children around the world.

Guttmacher—guttmacher.org

The Guttmacher Institute is a leading research and policy organization committed to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in the United States and globally.

Harriet's Apothecary—harrietsapotheccary.com

Harriet's Apothecary is an intergenerational, healing village led by the brilliance and wisdom of Black Cis Women, Queer & Trans healers, artists, health professionals, magicians, activists & ancestors.

Love is Respect—loveisrespect.org

Loveisrespect's mission is to engage, educate and empower young people to prevent and end abusive relationships.

National Abortion Access Fund—fundabortionnow.org

National Network of Abortion Funds works to make sure that all people can get the abortions they seek.

No More Stigma Tumblr Page—abortstigma.tumblr.com

AbortStigma is meant to flood the Internet with abortion experiences and discard the horrors that pro-lifers have painted in our silence.

Planned Parenthood—plannedparenthood.org

Planned Parenthood are a trusted health care provider, an informed educator, a passionate advocate, and a global partner helping similar organizations around the world. Planned Parenthood delivers high-quality sexual and reproductive health care, education, and information to millions of people worldwide. For nearly 100 years, Planned Parenthood has promoted a commonsense approach to sexual and reproductive health and well-being, based on respect for each individual's right to make informed, independent decisions about health, sex, and their future.

Women Help Women—consult.womenhelp.org

Women Help Women is an international group of activists, trained counselors and non-profit organizations and foundations. We bridge the gap between reproductive rights advocacy efforts and service provision.

1 in 3 Campaign—1in3campaign.org

The 1 in 3 Campaign is a grassroots movement to start a new conversation about abortion—telling our stories, on our own terms.

GLOSSARY

We tried to use simple language to make this zine easy to understand. There are probably still some words that you don't use every day, so we've defined those here. It's ok if you need to look up other words — the combination of slang, technical terms, and the language of social justice can be confusing.

Abortion: To end a pregnancy. "Abortion" is a general word that covers many different methods. Medical staff might refer to an abortion that you choose to have as an "induced abortion" and a stillbirth or miscarriage as a "spontaneous abortion," but most often "abortion" is used to mean ending a pregnancy deliberately before the embryo or fetus is capable of independent life.

Abortion Fund: A group of people who help you pay for your abortion if you can't afford it.

Access: The right and ability to enter a space or to use a service.

Accommodate: To fit someone's physical or mental needs.

Advocate: Someone who publicly supports something; you can be an advocate for someone else or for yourself and your own needs.

Affirmation: A sentence or saying that helps you focus on something positive.

Anesthesia: Medication that helps to lessen or numb physical pain.

Aspiration: Also called surgical or suction abortion, it's most common in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The contents of the uterus are removed with a thin tube called a cannula that is attached to either a hand-held syringe or a machine that creates suction.

BFF: Best Friends Forever

Centering: A breathing and meditation technique that helps you focus on your body and the present moment. Centering can help you feel more control of what is going on inside and around you.

Cope: To deal with something difficult.

Dialogue: A discussion or conversation between people or larger groups, especially one that explores a specific subject or resolution of a problem.

Dilation and Evacuation: An abortion technique for people whose pregnancies are in the second trimester. Dilation and evacuation (D&E) procedures, like aspiration/surgical abortions, involve removing fetal tissue using a combination of suction and surgical instruments. For D&E procedures the cervix needs to be softened and stretched so that the tissue can pass through it. Sometimes this softening can happen on the same day as the procedure. In other cases it may be done over a period of two or three days.

Doula: A person who is trained to provide compassionate care and emotional, physical, and informational support to people across the spectrum of pregnancy, whether they face birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, fetal anomaly, or abortion. See "Intro" for more info.

Empower: To support someone as they gain control or power over their lives.

GLOSSARY

Erasure: Pretending some people's experiences don't exist. For example, non-binary people are erased by the definition of gender as "male" and "female" only. The experience of people of color might be erased by white activists who focus exclusively on pro-choice issues and ignore the larger spectrum of reproductive justice.

Escort: A person who accompanies a patient into a clinic and protects them from anti-choice protestors.

Genderqueer: Most often, a person whose gender identity falls outside "male" & "female." Genderqueer folks might also identify as "non-binary" or "gender non-conforming."

Gender neutral (pronouns): A word that refers to someone without using a specific gender. For example: they/them, as in, "Does Sam wanna go to the game today?" "I dunno, let me text them and ask." (Note: even if someone uses she/her or he/him pronouns, which are not considered gender neutral, gender is very individual! It's best not to assume.)

Hegemonic: The damaging social, cultural, ideological, or economic influence of a primary and controlling group or ideal. For example, ableism is a hegemonic structure that ignores the diversity of physical abilities and needs.

"Identifying as..." : Asserting that you belong to a certain group. Using a phrase like "I identify as non-binary," "I identify as a queer woman," or "How do you identify?" makes it possible for people to define themselves and tell each other who they are, instead of relying on assumptions.

Immerse: To go into something fully. For example, to immerse your hand in water is to put your hand fully underwater.

In-Clinic Abortion: When your entire (surgical or aspiration) abortion happens in the office or clinic of a provider. Abortions that take place during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy are usually around 5-7 minutes long. After a short recovery period, you can go home.

Internalize: To believe that lies and stereotypes about your gender, race, disability, etc., are true about you.

Medical or Medication Abortion: Also referred to as the "abortion pill." Most commonly, a combination of two medicines, mifepristone and misoprostol, that cause an abortion. Usually, you will take the first medicine (mifepristone) in a clinic and the second medicine (misoprostol) 24-48 hours later at home. For most people, the abortion is completed within a few days.

Microaggression: Subtle comments or actions directed at someone because of their membership in a minority or marginalized group. Microaggressions can be intentional or unintentional. Some examples: Assuming a person from an ethnic group is not a native English speaker, using the wrong pronouns to describe a trans person, or putting up a calendar with demeaning images of women in a workplace.

Mindfulness: Bringing your attention to how you feel in the present moment and accepting your emotions, thoughts, and physical sensations.

Misinformation: False or inaccurate information, usually given on purpose to persuade or mislead someone. For example, many anti-choice groups spread misinformation about abortion.

Procedure: "Procedure," "termination," and "abortion" are used to mean the same process of removing tissue from the uterus in order to end a pregnancy. Some people prefer one word over the other. It's up to you!

GLOSSARY

Process: To talk an issue or conflict through with someone else, or to think about something that has affected you until you reach a specific goal. For example, your goal might be to understand how something traumatic has affected you, to resolve an argument with a friend or loved one, or to get closure after a difficult experience.

Pro-Choice: The belief that abortion should be legal and accessible and that people should have the right to choose the reproductive decisions that make sense for them, including abortion, birth, and adoption.

Pronouns (/preferred gender pronouns): Words used to refer to people instead of using their name(s). For example: they/them, she/her, zi/zir, he/him, I, you, we. Preferred gender pronouns are the pronouns that someone would like other people to use when referring to them. For example, if I said my preferred gender pronouns were she/her, when you were talking about me, you'd say, "When is she going to meet us here?" "I talked to her earlier; she said around 8."

Protester: Someone who expresses publicly that they are against something that is going on in the hope that speaking out will change the practice. (Sometimes, there are anti-abortion protesters outside of clinics. They may say mean, untrue, and/or hurtful things to people seeking abortions in order to shame or discourage them. This can be tough to hear; keep in mind that their anger is not your problem and ignore them or react however feels best to you.)

Provider: Medical staff involved in the abortion procedure. Usually used to refer to the doctors or advanced practice clinicians (NP, PA, CNM) who are performing the procedure, but may be used to include nurses, medical assistants, or the clinic itself.

Sliding Scale: Indicates that a price for goods or services is adjusted based on a person's income or what they can afford. For example, this zine is sometimes sold on a sliding scale of \$8-12. Clinics may offer sliding scale fees for abortion and other health services if you can't afford to pay or don't have insurance coverage.

Stigma: A negative association that is socially attached to a particular choice, practice, condition, or group of people. Stigma often includes negative assumptions that are untrue, but have been made popular socially. Stigma tries to classify something as "bad," which can make it difficult for those who are being affected by it to talk about their experiences. Stigma can be a barrier to understanding and to listening to each other in a way that allows for nuance and complexity. One way that we can work to reduce stigma is to share our experiences and support each other in telling our stories, allowing for positive, negative, neutral, and something in between to all exist.

Surgical Abortion: Also referred to as in-clinic abortion and aspiration abortion.

Termination: Abortion; ending a pregnancy.

Visualization: A technique often used in meditation, meaning to close the eyes and mentally create images, or to imagine a range of sensory experiences including sight, smell, touch, sound, and taste.

Vocalization: To say something out loud; used especially to refer to putting words to feelings.

Zine: Short for magazine, a zine (pronounced "zeen") is a noncommercial, handmade and/or online publication usually focused on a particular theme or idea. For example, you're reading one now!

THANKS

This zine was created by volunteers of The Doula Project. The knowledge, art, words, and love shared here are a collaboration between past and present doula volunteers, members of our board of directors, and members of our leadership circle. Visit doulaproject.org for more information.

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Abortion Conversation Project

CREATIVITY. CONNECTION. FUNDING.

The Doula Project would like to extend special thanks to the Abortion Conversation Project. This project received a Seed Support grant from the Abortion Conversation Project to reduce abortion stigma. The Abortion Conversation Project is committed to eliminating the stigma of abortion by supporting individuals and small groups engaged in innovative projects that create new ways and opportunities to talk about abortion honestly and publicly.

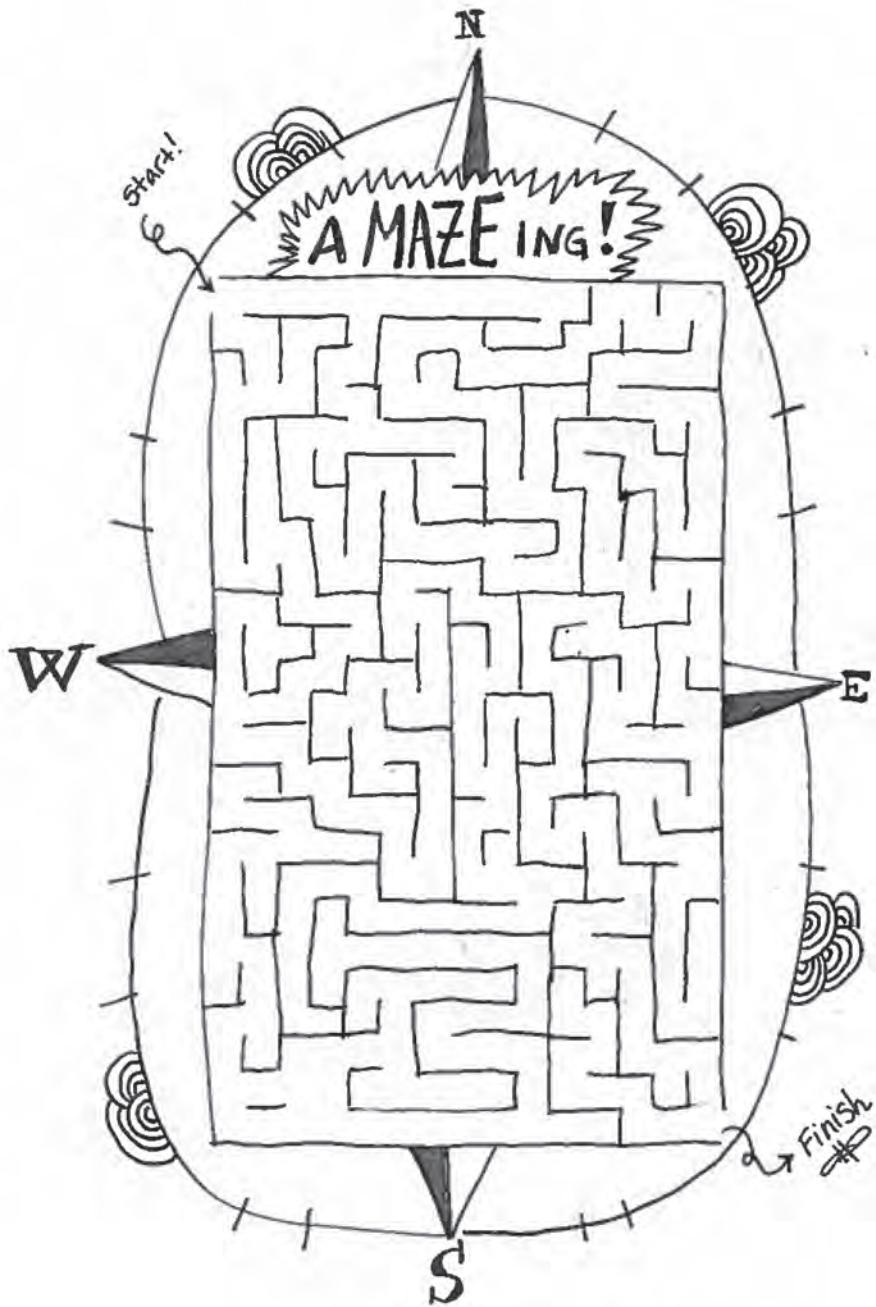
Visit ACP online at abortionconversationproject.org

NOTES

This zine is yours, so doodle or write on any page! You can even tear out pages if you want.

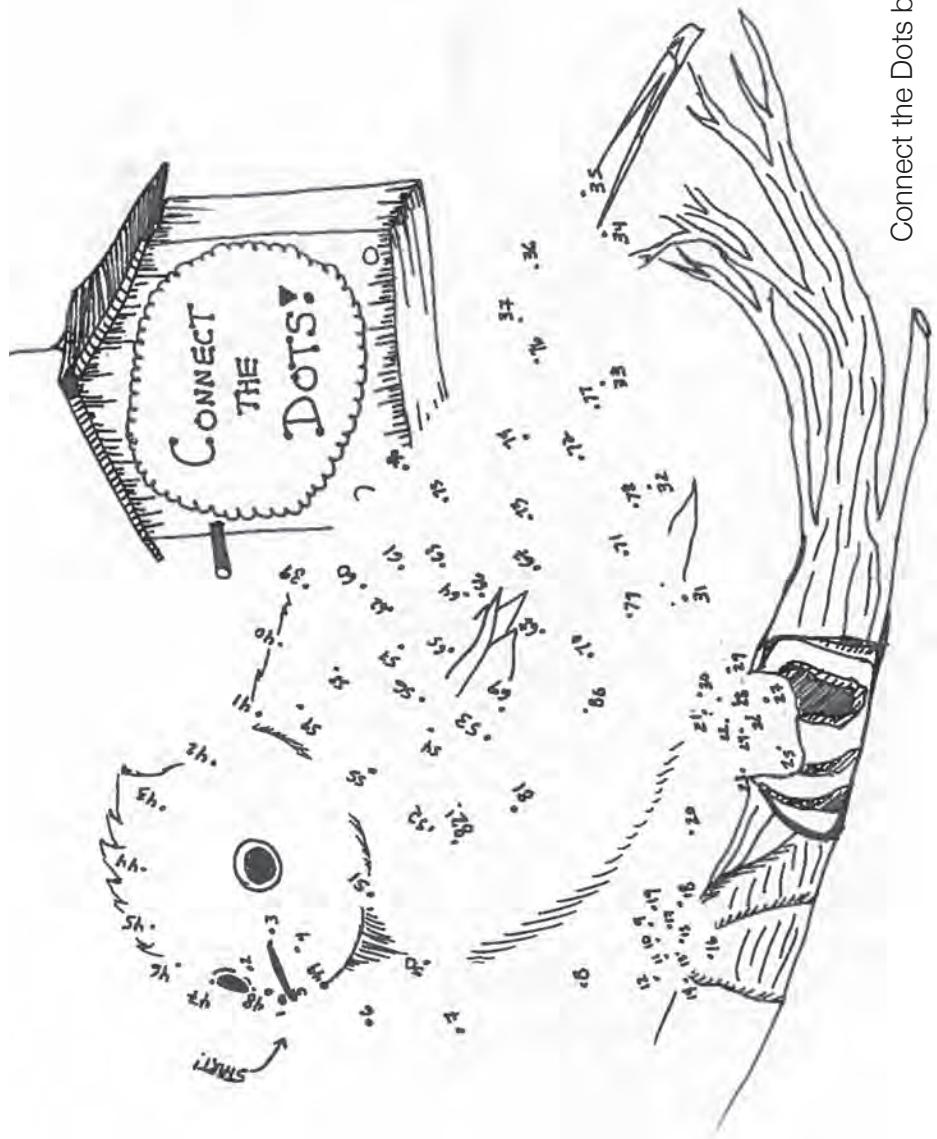
Here's some extra space for notes if you need it. You can jot down questions for your provider, things you're feeling, a to-do list, tips you want to remember, or whatever else.

Note from us: You are strong. We trust you.



Maze by Angie Frankel

Connect the Dots by Angie Frankel



ABORTION STORIES

Folks famous for their real-life exploits
& TV characters who've had an abortion

ACROSS

- 4) Kerry Washington plays *Scandal's* stylish & powerful fixer who has an abortion when she unexpectedly becomes pregnant with President Grant's baby.
- 5) Tennis legend who won the 'Battle of the Sexes' first high-profile female openly gay athlete.
- 7) Golden Girl Bea Arthur played the title character, a 47-year old grandmother who became the first lead to have an abortion in this 1972 two-parter.
- 8) Mexican painter who produced surrealist masterpieces while in chronic pain from a bus accident she was in at age 18.
- 9) Artist on season 4 of *Girls* who famously casually told Adam "I can't go for a run because I had an abortion yesterday."
- 10) Made national headlines for her 11-hour filibuster fighting a restrictive abortion bill as a Texas Senator.
- 11) Christina Hendricks played Sterling Cooper's indispensable office manager who contemplates a thrc abortion when she becomes pregnant with Roger's baby.
- 12) Korean-American comedian. Starred in *All-American Girl*, one of the first shows to feature an East Asian family.
- 13) Cardiothoracic surgeon at Grey Sloan Memorial Hospital; played by Sandra Oh. Experienced an ectopic pregnancy, followed by another unwanted pregnancy.

DOWN

- 1) Noted civil and women's rights activist. Won Pulitzer and National Book Award for *The Color Purple*.
- 2) Born in Trinidad, the world's biggest female hip-hop star. First female solo artist to have seven singles simultaneously on the Billboard Hot 100.
- 3) Puerto Rican star, won an Oscar for *West Side Story*. One of only a dozen people to EGOT.
- 6) Wife of Stef Adams Foster, adoptive mother of 4. Had a late-term abortion in season 2 due to severe complications from pre-eclampsia.
- 14) Supported by her boyfriend Drew on *Parenthood* when she decided to terminate her unplanned teen pregnancy.

11) Joan Holloway 12) Margaret Cho 13) Cristela Rang 14) Amy Ellis

6) Leah Adams Foster 7) Madea Franklin 8) Rita Rehli 9) Leslie Rose Howard 10) Wendy Davis

ANSWERS 1) Alice Walker 2) Nicki Minaj 3) Rita Moreno 4) Olivia Pope 5) Blithejean King

Crossword Puzzle by Erika Byrnison

WORD SEARCH

ART BY NICK MORAN

While you wait, try searching for words from this list of some activities that people commonly do in the hours, days, and weeks after their procedures.

Q W U P S S J S C X E N C W A
P Q T Z E K T Y H Q L X X O X
K M A M L N U N A R P P J R Y
X S J S F F E F A T E R E A K C
J H J E M T F H W N L S D F I T R
R O O L A F A H I A P I X C Q
E N V U C S L M E T X E C R E W
A E R U S T I T A H S A U X C F
D R N D A X L T F L T R A E Q
R C A D G L Y T R E R E A E Q
A C L L E G T N I E G G W A G
W T E E Q B T G E P O V H M J K
T S E P B X M P N Y W O O N Q H
G N T A H O E A D G W D N Q H
R U C F U R S D S E M C U P E

SELF MASSAGE

FAMILY TIME

YOGA

TEA

READ

WORK

SHOWER

DRAW

JOURNAL

CHAT WITH FRIENDS

NETFLIX

SLEEP

PEDICURE

ICE CREAM

RELAX

EAT

HEATING PAD

CUDDLE

THE DOULA PROJECT

The Doula Project is a volunteer-run, collectively led organization of over seventy-five full-spectrum doulas. Our doulas have backgrounds as social justice activists, teachers, childbirth educators, birth doulas, social workers, writers, performers, and reproductive health professionals. Since we were founded in 2007, we've supported hundreds of birth clients and over ten thousand people through abortion and fetal loss.

Traditional doula services are often inaccessible to the people who need them most: low-income people and people without existing support structures. By partnering directly with healthcare providers in New York City, we become part of the clinic structure for both clients and healthcare service providers, seamlessly integrating support into our clients' experiences regardless of the outcome of their pregnancy. The Doula Project works to create a society in which all pregnant people have access to the care and support they need during their pregnancies and the ability to make healthy decisions for themselves, whether they face birth, miscarriage, stillbirth, fetal anomaly, or abortion.

Every zine sale helps The Doula Project provide free and sliding scale copies of the zine to people having abortions. Zine sales also support our work providing free full-spectrum care and partnering with other organizations around the country to change the landscape of reproductive rights, access, and support. The Doula Project is a 501(c)3 charitable organization.

Find us online! Wholesale zine orders available.



Please note that we are a small collective, and we cannot reply to individual requests for abortion self-care advice online.

DIY Doula: Self-Care for Before, During, & After Your Abortion
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